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Assistance in Developing Effective Community Web Sites Available

Nebraska communities can now apply for assistance in developing Web sites which effectively market communities to prospective new residents and businesses as well as providing information for current residents. Research by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and University of Nebraska has further reinforced the need for a comprehensive community Web site.

A community Web site is the worldwide gateway to a community. The needs of new and current residents are information at their fingertips. Further research shows the Web site to be the number one marketing component for recruiting new residents and former alumni. A Web site that showcases the area and provides employment and retirement opportunities is the number one driver for new resident attraction. New residents are also looking for quality of life, including safety and security, access to medical facilities, availability of recreational facilities, quality of medical care, and affordable housing.

The **Developing Web Sites for Community Growth** project will provide hands-on assistance to 10 communities, accessibility testing of Web sites, and marketing assistance. This project will **not** include any Web site coding or development. The project is strictly focused on content development, Web site enhancements, and marketing. At the end of the process the community will have fully developed all content for the Web site and will be able to pass that on to their Web developer of choice.

If a community is not selected for hands on assistance, the detailed manual will be available for all Nebraska communities. The manual will guide the community through the process and will include a Web site content development checklist and walkthrough process, best practices, project planning, marketing resources, Web 2.0 enhancements, and much more.

Project partners include the Department of Economic Development, University of Nebraska Extension, Nebraska Public Power District, AIM Institute, and the Nebraska Information Technology Commission Community Council. The Developing Web Sites for Community Growth project has been funded through a grant from the Nebraska Information Technology Commission's Community Technology Fund.

Applications to participate in the program are due August 22. Application materials are available from the Nebraska Information Technology Commission's Web site (www.nitc.ne.gov).

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